Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 03059 01 OF 03 042012Z

64
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 CEA-01 COME-00

EB-07 FRB-03 CIEP-01 STR-01 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01

SAM-01 OMB-01 AGR-05 SAJ-01 /104 W
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P R 041931Z FEB 75
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6406
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY
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USDOCOSOUTH PRIORITY
CINCUSAFE PRIORITY
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PAGE 02 PARIS 03059 01 OF 03 042012Z

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Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

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AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 03059

MILITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, FR
SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES OF NEW MEMBERS OF
FRENCH GOVERNMENT

REF: PARIS 2724 (NOTAL)

1. FOLLOWING IS BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON FOUR NEW MEMBERS OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT, ANNOUNCED JANUARY 31 (REFTEL):

2. YVON BOURGES, MINISTER OF DEFENSE.
AT A TIME WHEN THE FRENCH ARMY'S HISTORIC ROLE AS A CITIZENS' ARMY IS BEING CALLED INTO QUESTION AND WHEN ITS MISSION IN THE DEFENSE OF THE NATION AND OF EUROPE IS UNDER SEVERE SCRUTINY, PRESIDENT VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING HAS CALLED TO THE ARMY'S HEAD A POLITICIAN AND FORMER CIVIL SERVANT WHO HAS NEVER SERVED A DAY IN UNIFORM. BOURGES, 53, THE SON OF A COLONEL, SERVED IN THE PREFECTORAL CORPS FROM 1944 TO 1947. HE THEN ENTERED THE FRENCH OVERSEAS SERVICE, BECOMING GOVERNOR OF UPPER VOLTA IN 1956 AND LATER HIGH COMMISSIONER IN FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA AND GENERAL HIGH COMMISSIONER IN BRAZZAVILLE. AFTER 1961, WHEN HE BECAME DIRECTOR OF CABINET FOR MINISTER OF INFORMATION ROGER FREY HIS CAREER TOOK A DECIDEDLY POLITICAL TURN. IN 1962 HE WAS ELECTED MAYOR OF THE SMALL BRETON TOWN OF DINARD AND IN THE SAME YEAR WAS ELECTED DEPUTY FROM THE SURROUNDING DEPARTMENT OF ILLE-ET-VILAINE, POSTS WHICH HE CONTINUES TO HOLD (HE MUST TURN OVER HIS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEAT TO HIS SUPPLEANT IN ORDER TO ASSUME HIS MINISTRY).

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3. FROM 1965 TO 1973, BOURGES HELD A NUMBER OF CABINET JOBS INCLUDING SECRETARY OF STATE FORSCIENTIFIC RESEARCH (1965-66); SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE PRIME MINISTER FOR INFORMATION (1966-67), DURING WHICH TIME HE ATTAINED A CERTAIN NOTORIETY FOR SUPPRESSING AN ALLEGEDLY PORNOGRAPHIC AND SACRILEGIOUS FILM "LES RELIGIEUSES"; SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COOPERATION (1967-68); SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (1968-72);

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AND MINISTER OF COMMERCE (1972-73). HIS OVERSEAS SERVICE AND CERTAIN OF HIS MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES REFLECT BOURGES' LONG INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICAN AFFAIRS. HE HAS LONG CHAMPIONED A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FRANCE AND HER FORMER AFRICAN COLONIES AND HE WAS A STRONG PARTISAN OF FRANCE'S PRO-BIAFRAN POLICY IN THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR.

4. BOURGES IS A STRONG GAULLIST AND A UDR CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER. HE BACKED CHABAN-DELMAS IN THE 1974 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN AND REMAINED ALOOF TOWARDS GIS-CARD AFTER THE ELECTION. HIS APPOINTMENT TESTIFIES TO CHIRAC'S ABILITY TO RECONCILE THE HARD-LINE BUT YOUNGER GAULLISTS TO THE NEW REGIME. HE HAS NOT DISPLAYED THE RIGID ANTI-ATLANTIC SENTIMENTS OF MANOF HIS GAULLIST COLLEAGUES. INDEED, RELATIONS BETWEEN BOURGES AND EMBASSY OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN EXCELLENT. ALTHOUGH HE DOES NOT SPEAK ENGLISH, BOURGES HAS VISITED THE UNITED STATES AT LEAST TWICE, IN 1963 WITH A NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FINANCE COMMITTEE DELEGATION, AND IN 1970 AS SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

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PAGE 01 PARIS 03059 02 OF 03 042026Z

64
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

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EB-07 FRB-03 CIEP-01 STR-01 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6407
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

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AMEMBASSY DUBLIN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
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USMISSION NATO PRIORITY
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PAGE 02 PARIS 03059 02 OF 03 042026Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 PARIS 03059

5. GENERAL MARCEL MAURICE BIGEARD, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENSE.
SON OF A RAILROAD SWITCHMAN, BIGEARD, 58, HAS RISEN FROM THE RANKS TO BECOME ONE OF FRANCE'S MOST EXTRAORDINARY AND HIGHLY-DECORATED GENERALS. LEAVING A BANK CLERK'S COUNTER IN HIS NATIVE LORRAINE, BIGEARD FOUGHT IN WORLD WAR II, WAS INTERNED IN GERMANY, ESCAPED, AND LATER FOUGHT IN THE MAQUIS, WHERE HE FOUND HIS METIER AS A SOLDIER. AS A COMMANDER OF PARATROOPERS, HE BECAME A PUBLIC HERO FOR HIS DARING EXPLOITS IN INDOCHINA AND ALGERIA. HIS EXPERIENCES IN INDOCHINA WERE THE SORT OF WHICH LEGENDS ARE MADE: LONG FORCED MARCHES THROUGH VIETNAMESE JUNGLES, A LEADING ROLE IN THE DEFENSE OF DIEN BIEN PHU, PRISONER OF THE VIETMINH FROM MAY TO SEPTEMBER 1954. IN ALGERIA, HE EMERGED AS A LEADING EXPERT ON COUNTER-GUERRILLA WARFARE. HE

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PLAYED A LEADING ROLE IN BREAKING THE BACK OF GUERRILLA RESISTANCE IN ALGERIA, AND SURVIVED AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT IN BONE WHICH COST HIM AN EYE. ON THE BASIS OF THESE EXPLOITS, BIGEARD BECAME THE MODEL FOR THE LEADING CHARACTER IN JEAN LARTEGUY'S NOVEL "LES CENTURIONS" (LATER MADE INTO A FILM WITH ANTHONY QUINN).

6. ALTHOUGH HE TRIED TO STEER CLEAR OF POLITICS IN THE ALGERIAN IMBROGLIO, BIGEARD -- WHO BY 1958 WAS THE YOUNGEST COLONEL AND THE MOST DECORATED SOLDIER IN THE FRENCH ARMY -- FELL AFOUL OF GENERAL DE GAULLE AND WAS TRANSFERRED BACK TO FRANCE. HE DID NOT ATTAIN HIS GENERAL RANK UNTIL 1967. SINCE THEN, HIS RISE HAS BEEN RAPID; HE COMMANDED THE FOURTH MILITARY REGION (BORDEAUX) PRIOR TO HIS APPOINTMENT AS SECRETARY OF STATE. THE LEAN, ATHLETIC, ASCETIC, PIPE-SMOKING BIGEARD IS CONFIDENTIAL

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VERY MUCH A SOLDIER'S SOLDIER, DETERMINED TO LEAD RATHER THAN MERELY COMMAND (HE STILL RUNS FIVE MILES EVERY MORNING). IN BECOMING THE FIRST SERVING GENERAL TO BE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENSE SINCE 1940 (WHEN BRIGADIER GENERAL CHARLES DE GAULLE WAS CALLED INTO PAUL REYNAUD'S GOVERNMENT), BIGEARD MAY SEE HIS TASK AS RESTORING DISCIPLINE AND A SENSE OF PURPOSE IN A FRENCH ARMY THREATENED BY BUDGET RESTRAINTS, RENT BY SOLDIER DEMONSTRATIONS, AND UNCERTAIN OF ITS ROLE IN EUROPEAN DEFENSE. ALTHOUGH PRAISE FOR BIGEARD'S CAREER AS A LEADER OF MEN HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD, HIS APPOINTMENT HAS ALREADY BEEN CRITICIZED IN THE PRESS; "LE QUOTIDIEN DE PARIS" SAID HE WAS A MAN OF YESTERDAY FOR THE PROBLEMS OF TOMORROW.

7. AYMAR ACHILLE-FOULD, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ACHILLE-FOULD, 49, COMES FROM AN OLD FRENCH POLITICAL FAMILY WHICH FOR THE LAST 140 YEARS HAS COUNTED SEVERAL DEPUTIES AND MINISTERS. (THE FAMILY ACQUIRED THE HYPHEN ONLY IN 1948). ACHILLE-FOULD WAS A NAVAL OFFICER IN WORLD WAR II, IN INDOCHINA AND ALGERIA. HE WAS ELECTED DEPUTY FROM GIRONDE IN 1962 AND REELECTED IN 1967, 1968 AND 1973. ACTIVE IN THE FRENCH POLITICAL CENTER, HE WAS ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF THE CENTRE DEMOCRATIE
ET PROGRES (CDP), A SPLINTER GROUP WHICH BROKE FROM THE OTHER CENTRISTS TO SUPPORT POMPIDOU IN 1969; HE REMAINS A VICE PRESIDENT OF THIS PARTY. IN JANUARY 1975, HE TOOK PART IN THE FORMATION OF A LEFT REFORMER FORMATION MADE UP OF OTHER CENTRIST GROUPS. ACHILLE-FOULD ENTERED THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

APRIL 1973 WHEN HE WAS NAMED SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE MINISTER OF THE ARMED FORCES; AMONG OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES, HE PROMOTED SPORTS IN THE ARMED FORCES AND LOOKED AFTER THE PROBLEMS OF YOUNG CONSCRIPTS. IN MARCH 1974, HE WAS NAMED SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT, BUT HE HELD THIS PORTFOLIO ONLY A SHORT TIME BEFORE POMPIDOU'S DEATH FORCED A CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT.

8. ACHILLE-FOULD HAS BECOME A WEALTHY MAN THROUGH HIS
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 PARIS 03059 02 OF 03 042026Z

TRADING CONNECTIONS (HE HAS BEEN PRESIDENT OF THE NIGERIA MARINE AND TRADING COMPANY SINCE 1960); HE IS THE PROUD OWNER OF VINEYARDS IN THE BORDEAUX AREA WHERE HE PRODUCES A MEDOC OF GOOD REPUTATION. FLUENT IN ENGLISH AND WELL-DISPOSED TOWARDS THE UNITED STATES, ACHILLE-FOULD HAS MADE FREQUENT TRIPS TO THE US. HE

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PAGE 01 PARIS 03059 03 OF 03 042048Z

64
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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EB-07 FRB-03 CIEP-01 STR-01 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01

SAM-01 OMB-01 AGR-05 SAJ-01 /104 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6408
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

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AMEMBASSY DUBLIN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY
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USMISSION EC BRUSSELS PRIORITY
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USCINCEUR PRIORITY
CINCUSAREUR PRIORITY
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CINCLANT PRIORITY
AT SEA
CINCUSAFE PRIORITY
USDOCOSOUTH PRIORITY
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AMCONSUL LYON
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PAGE 02 PARIS 03059 03 OF 03 042048Z

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AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 PARIS 03059

WAS A LEADER GRANTEE IN 1968 WHEN HE TRAVELLED WIDELY IN THE COUNTRY AND MET SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY, WHOM HE NOW CONSIDERS A CLOSE FRIEND; HE WAS A FRENCH DELEGATE TO THE UN IN NEW YORK IN 1970. HE HAS A NUMBER OF FAMILY CONNECTIONS TO THE US; HIS SISTERS HUSBAND IS AMERICAN AND ONE OF ACHILLE-FOULD'S TWO DAUGHTERS STUDIED AT BARNARD COLLEGE IN THE LATE 1960'S.

9. OVER THE YEARS EMBASSY OFFICIALS HAVE ESTIMATED ACHILLE-FOULD AS AN AMIABLE, AMBITIOUS AND HARD-WORKING POLITICIAN ALTHOUGH NOT GIFTED INTELLECTUALLY. NEVERTHELESS, HE HAS SKILLFULLY KEPT HIS POLITICAL CONTACTS AND HAS ESTABLISHED HIMSELF AS A COMPTETENT SECOND-LEVEL POLITICAL PERSONALITY. HE WILL HAVE HIS HANDS FULL IN RESTORING MORALE AND EFFICIENCY TO THE

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Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

FLATERING FRENCH POSTAL AND TELEPHONE SYSTEM.

10. JEAN-FRANCOIS DENIAU, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE. DENIAU, WHO HAS RECENTLY JOINED THE INDEPENDENT REPUBLICAN PARTY, IS A MODEL GISCARDIAN: RICH, TALENTED, ELEGANT AND CASUAL. A CAREER CIVIL SERVANT EXPERIENCED IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND NEGOTIATING, A SKILLFUL MANEUVERER IN THE CORRIDORS OF EUROPE, DENIAU HAS BEEN RECALLED TO A POST HE BRIEFLY HELD IN 1974. THE SON OF AN ENGINEER, DENIAU, 46, HAS SPENT MOST OF HIS CAREER CONCERNED WITH THE PROBLEMS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. FROM 1958 TO 1959, HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE FRENCH DELEGATION TO THE OECD AND OF THE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND EURATOM. FROM 1959 TO 1963, HE AS IN CHARGE OF NEGOTIATING WITH COUNTRIES SEEKING
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 PARIS 03059 03 OF 03 042048Z

ADMISSION TO THE EC; THE YOUNGEST AT THAT TIME OF SOME 40 EC DIRECTORS, HE LED THE COMMUNITY TEAM DURING THE UK ENTRY NEGOTIATIONS FROM 1961 TO 1963.

11. AFTER THE UNSUCCESSFUL CONCLUSIONS OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS, DENIAU FELL INTO DISFAVOR WITH GENERAL DE GAULLE, WHO DISAPPROVED OF HIS WARM ADVOCACY OF UK ENTRY, AND HE WAS EXILED AS AMBASSADOR TO MAURITANIA UNTIL 1966. IN 1967, DENIAU RETURNED TO PARIS FOR BRIEF STINTS IN CHARGE OF INTER-MINISTERIAL COORDINATION ON THE SECAM COLOR TV PROCESS AND AS PRESIDENT OF THE FRANCO-SOVIET MIXED COMMISSION. LATER THE SAME YEAR HE BECAME A MEMBER OF THE EC COMMISSION WHERE HE WAS FIRST IN CHARGE OF EC EXTERNAL TRADE AND SUBSEQUENTLY IN CHARGE OF SUCCESSFULLY NEGOTIATING THE ENTRY OF THE UK, IRELAND AND DENMARK INTO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. HE ALSO DEVELOPED POLICY GUIDELINES FOR EC AFRICAN RELATIONS.

12. IN APRIL 1973 DENIAU WAS DRAWN INTO THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE FIRST TIME AS SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER (AT THAT TIME MICHEL JOBERT), WHERE HE WAS IN CHARGE OF FRENCH ASSISTANCE TOTHE SUB-SAHARAN FRANCOPHONE STATES. TEN MONTHS LATER, HE WAS NAMED SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE; DURING THE ILLNESS LAST YEAR OF AGRICULTURE MINISTER RAYMOND MARCELLIN, DENIAU SUCCESSFULLY CONDUCTED FOR FRANCE AGRICULTURAL PRICE NEGOTIATIONS IN BRUSSELS. NOW HE HAS BEEN RECALLED TO THE AGRICULTURE MINISTRY WHERE THE JOB MAY BE PROVING TOO GREAT FOR MINISTER CHRISTIAN BONNET TO HANDLE ALONE; DENIAU IS ALREADY RUMORED AS A POSSIBLE REPLACEMENT TO BONNET, WHOSE HEALTH IS BAD. IN

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

HIS PRESENT POST DENIAU WILL BE ESPECIALLY CHARGED WITH LONG-RANGE PLANNING IN FRENCH AGRICULTURE. DENIAU SPEAKS GOOD ENGLISH AND HAS FREQUENTLY VISITED THE US. AMERICAN OFFICIALS IN BRUSSELS CONSIDER HIM AMBITIOUS, BRILLIANT, TOUGH IN NEGOTIATION AND SOMEWHAT SHY IN PERSONAL MANNER. DENIAU'S OLDER BROTHER XAVIER, AN ARDENT GAULLIST, IS A FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR OVERSEAS TERRITORIES.
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Draft Date: 04 FEB 1975
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

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